

Providing resources to support families of young kids at home and beyond

PINAL COUNTY (March 31, 2020) – These are challenging times for families, especially those with young children, who are especially sensitive to situations causing stress in their environments and among their adult caregivers.

First Things First, Arizona's early childhood agency, is committed to providing parents and caregivers with information and resources to support families with young children as our communities continue to be impacted by the coronavirus (COVID-19).

As families spend more time at home, FTF has rounded up some resources that remind parents that everyday moments matter most when it comes to young children's development. These include:

- Helping your child learn through play
<https://www.firstthingsfirst.org/resources/learnthroughplay/>
- Boosting learning through active, outdoor play
<https://www.firstthingsfirst.org/first-things/active-outdoor-play-boosts-learning/>
- Building a love of math and science early
<https://www.firstthingsfirst.org/first-things/build-love-of-math-science-early/>
- Developing language and literacy skills
<https://www.firstthingsfirst.org/resources/language-and-literacy/>

In addition, below are some resources to help you support your toddler or preschooler during the coronavirus health crisis. A top tip when talking with young children about any difficult situation? Keep it simple and age-appropriate. For example, "We're taking a break from playing with others so we can all stay healthy."

Birth to Five Helpline

The Birth to Five Helpline is a program of Southwest Human Development and is partially funded by First Things First. It is a free service available to all Arizona families and caregivers of young children.

Having someone to talk with or lend an empathetic ear is more important than ever, and the helpline's early childhood experts are available by phone, text or email to answer any parenting questions, from basic health and nutrition to how to handle challenging behaviors and more. Helpline specialists can also help you think about how to talk with children in an appropriate way about what is going on in our

world and all you are doing to keep them and their families safe. Birth to Five Helpline specialists are available by phone/text at 877-705-KIDS (5437) Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., or you can send a message online.

Talking to young kids about coronavirus

Our partners at ZERO TO THREE offer several excellent resources and tips for families, including age-appropriate responses to common questions and activities for young children while social distancing. <https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/3210-tips-for-families-coronavirus>

Sesame Street: Caring for Each Other

The early learning experts at Sesame Street know that children thrive with structure in their lives and learn best through play. This site provides content, resources and ideas to offer comfort and spark playful learning moments. <https://www.sesamestreet.org/caring>

PBS Kids for Parents

PBS Kids offers a wealth of helpful articles and videos, including, how to talk to your kids about coronavirus: <https://www.pbs.org/parents/thrive/how-to-talk-to-your-kids-about-coronavirus> and how you and your kids can de-stress during coronavirus: <https://www.pbs.org/parents/thrive/how-you-and-your-kids-can-de-stress-during-coronavirus>.

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About First Things First –First Things First is a voter-created, statewide agency that funds early learning, family support and children’s preventive health services for children birth to age 5. Decisions about how those funds are spent are made by local councils staffed by community volunteers. To learn more, visit FirstThingsFirst.org.